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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO. [REDACTED]

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

DATE DISTR. 16 Nov. 1951

SUBJECT Survey of the Recruiting System and Duration of Basic Military Service in the Czechoslovak Army

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE 25X1A

NO. OF ENCLS. 1*
(LISTED BELOW)

ACQUIRED [REDACTED]

DATE OF INFO. [REDACTED]

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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1. Just prior to 1938 the Czechoslovak Army instituted a two-year compulsory military service regulation, which applied to all branches of the service. All Czechoslovak male citizens who had attained the age of 20 were subject to draft. There were three classes of enlistees. To the first class belonged those who reported in their twentieth year and were accepted as physically fit, usually about 8 - 10 percent of the total enlistees. Those who were not accepted at the first enlistment reported the following year (at the age of 21), and the accepted ones comprised the 2nd class. About 70 percent of the men were enlisted in this class. Those who were not accepted in the 2nd class were required to attend the enlistment of the 3rd class the following year. In this class, the rest of the enlistees who had by-passed the two previous enlistments, and who had now reached the age of 22 were drafted, if physically fit. Enlistees who were not accepted into any of the three classes were classified unfit for military service and were declared ineligible for further enlistment. The men who were recruited were classified "A" (fit for service with arms), "B" (fit for auxiliary service without arms), or "C" (unfit for any type of service and subject to reclassification).
2. College students who became eligible for draft while still in school generally went through the usual enlistment routine and then were given a one-year postponement of military service. Additional postponements were granted on occasion, provided applications and a certificate of studies were forwarded every year to the recruiting office. Farmers who had no male relatives to take care of their farms if they went into the service and men who were the sole support of their families could apply for special reserve status. If placed on reserve status, these men generally served only about five months. However, they were subject to more frequent refresher courses than those who served the full two years.
3. In the prewar republic, a large percentage of the enlistees were classified "C". However, as the situation in Czechoslovakia became more tense, the induction regulations became more rigid. After the war, the prewar recruiting system was renewed. It was then necessary to call up all war contingents (from 1939 to 1945) of men who had not served in the

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Auth.: HB 78-2
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army during the Protectorate, namely the classes of 1917-1922. This presented a fairly complicated problem, which was solved in the following manner: The 1917 annual (2nd class) was called up in May 1945 for one year's service. The 1918 - 1922 annuals were gradually called up between 1946 and 1949 to attend two-or three-month training periods as special reservists. The 1923 annual was the first post war group which was subject to the regular two-year service, and then only the 3rd class, i.e., 22-year olds. Most of this annual was recruited and entered service on 1 October 1945. From that time until 1949 contingents of recruits were composed mostly of the 3rd class. Since 1949 there has been an increasing percentage of enlisted men in the 2nd class (21-year olds).

4. As a result of provisions of the Defense Act of 1949 the Czechoslovak Army adopted the system of having two rather than three enlisted classes. The 1st class contains contingents of 20-year old men, while the 2nd class is composed of 21-year olds. The new system actually became effective in 1951, with a considerable percentage of the 1931 annual (20-year olds) already having been enlisted and having been gradually called up to basic military service. By 1952 the 3rd enlisted class will have all but disappeared, with the exception of a few cases of granted postponements, etc.

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